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homemakers' chat
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Friday, May 28, 1943

SUBJECT:"MORE WARTIME CLEANING TIPS." Information from home economists of the U. S. Department of agriculture.

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Nobody needs to tell you, if you ever have kept house, how much time cleaning house can take. The sweeping, dusting, scrubbing, polishing, and "straightening up" can take hours and hours of the day. In fact, many a bride who has started out with the idea of keeping her home spick and span comes to feel that she is "cleaning her life away," considering the time she spends at it. For cleaning can be a perpetual job that lingers and drags on and on, if you let it.

In wartime few women can afford to give hours and hours a day just to cleaning the house. Women who do war work and keep house beside simply haven't the time. Very often they have only a few minutes left after cooking, washing, ironing and other household work. So today many housewives are asking for cleaning shortcuts.

Here are some answers from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture...suggestions on how to cut house cleaning time.

One way to do it is to mobilize the family. Many hands make light work of cleaning as well as any other job. All ages in your home may help in one way or another. You will save time in the long run if you spend a little extra time at the start to show children how to do certain cleaning jobs easily and how to save time. Make each child responsible for certain jobs and help him take pride in his work. (One way to make children enjoy sharing household tasks is to give praise for jobs well done.)

Another way to save time in cleaning is to put away all articles you don't

use and not let new ones accumulate. Almost every home has a collection of things that are not in use but catch dust and make extra cleaning. They are the things to put away or give away. Magazines, newspapers and letters are among the things that collect before you realize it. You can cut down on dusting, cleaning and washing by packing away silver, china and linen not in everyday use. The same is true of draperies, bric-a-brac, pictures and extra rugs--whatever adds unnecessary work. Clothes closets take up a lot of cleaning time. They are easier to clean if you keep shoes off the floor on racks, and if you weed out clothes not in use. Have one closet or a chest in the house set aside just for out-of-season clothes - a place to keep the winter clothes in summer and the summer clothes in winter.

Whatever you can do to keep dirt from getting into the house means time saved in cleaning. Have mats at every door to keep dirt from coming indoors on shoes. Have a small broom hanging just outside the door to brush off dust from shoes, and farm and garden clothes before entering. And have a box or shelf just outside or just inside the door where the family can put muddy overshoes or soiled garden shoes until they are cleaned. All this saves "tracking in." Set the shoes on a folded newspaper. When the paper is soiled you can throw it away and replace it with a new one.

If one window in your house faces a dusty road so lets in more dust than others--or lets in soot, you can use a folding cheesecloth screen in the window when open to keep the dust out.

Here's another way to save time and steps. Keep your cleaning tools in a central location if you can. And keep them together so you won't have to run to one end of the house for the broom and to another end of the house for the dustpan. If your house has more than one floor, have a set of cleaning equipment on each floor is you can--broom, brushes, dustpan, dustcloth, mop, scouring powder and so on. A waste basket in each room saves time and steps, too.

The old saying--a place for everything and everything in its place is a good wartime slogan. Shelves and cupboards, hooks, hangers and other arrangements for keeping things save time in cleaning--also family tempers. A clutter of articles with no place to go but the floor make cleaning difficult.

After each meal give the dining room a quick brush-up to whisk off greasy or sticky crumbs before thay can spot the rug or floor. This will save more difficult cleaning later. In any room in the house sweeping floors quickly and often with a soft brush, and sweeping rugs with a carpet sweeper saves time and work on regular cleaning days.

In a bathroom with a tile or linoleum floor, wash the floor with a short-handled mop that is small and easy to wring out thoroughly by hand. In using such a mop you can work quickly and easily...won't use too much water which rots linoleum and loosens the cement in a tile floor.

In these busy days you may not be able to keep every room as spick-and-span as you would like. If you must choose between rooms in cleaning, give the more careful cleaning to the kitchen, bathroom and baby's room or nursery for the sake of family health. The other rooms can go with a "lick and a promise" if they must.